

Approved.
OPEN SPACE BOARD OF TRUSTEES
Minutes
February 12, 2003

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT

Ken Dunn	Sean Kendall	Linda Jourgensen
Linda Andes-Georges	Larry MacDonnell	

STAFF PRESENT

Mike Patton	Dean Paschall	Craig Sommers	Jim Reeder
Delani Wheeler	Dave Kuntz	Ann Goodhart	Cecil Fenio
Ronda Romero	Mark Gershman	Lynn Riedel	Kathy Damas
Laurie Deiter	Steve Taylor	Halice Rupp	Chris Wanner
Bryan Pritchett	Pete Taylor	Jean Koszalka	Eric Butler
Joe Mantione	Alice Guthrie		

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 1 – Public Participation/Items Not on the Agenda

Robert Sharpe, 5995 Marshall Avenue, asked for clarification about the Visitor Plan – is it just that or is it considered a Master Plan? He also asked for information about the members of the Visitor Plan Advisory Committee which staff told him would be available at the Cherryvale office. Mark Gershman responded that the Visitor Plan is actually one of a series of master planning efforts by the department.

Don Glen, 658 Furman Way, informed the Board that there was a meeting held on January 22 to invite citizen input regarding the CU Flatiron property. The general consensus was that citizens want to see the results of the hydrology study before any negotiations take place. He also reported on a biplane which he saw flying low out of Bear Canyon. Dean Paschall and the airport have been notified.

AGENDA ITEM 2 – Approval of Minutes

Linda Jourgensen moved that the minutes of January 22, 2003 be approved as amended by Linda Andes-Georges. Sean Kendall seconded the motion. It passed unanimously.

AGENDA ITEM 3 – Director's Update

Mike Patton announced that the budget forecast has been adjusted downward again. As staff is updated the Board will also be informed.

Delani Wheeler reported on the Northern Front Range Regional Open Space Forum which was held on January 25, 2003. There were about 59 people from 11 jurisdictions present and there was a great amount of interest in continuing the communication that has been started. Staff is preparing transcriptions of the ideas that came from the breakout sessions and comment cards. Larry MacDonnell suggested sending a copy of the materials to each jurisdiction for distribution among attendees. He advised that a request be made for each jurisdiction to designate a representative for a steering committee which would determine the next steps for the group. Larry added that the attendees were very enthusiastic and there were many good ideas that came from the discussions.

Dave Kuntz reminded the Board about the field trip planned for Friday, February 14, 2003. Dave also distributed information about a prairie dog conference to be held in Fort Collins at the end of the month.

Visitor Plan

Mark Gershman announced that the first Visitor Plan Advisory Committee (VPAC) meeting was successful with all 13 members present. Members were able to meet each other and the tasks, strategies and problems were presented. There was opportunity for public comment as well. Linda Jourgensen noted that both recreational and environmental interests were represented in the group. Mark announced that the concept plan will be presented at the next meeting. Meeting dates have been scheduled, tentatively, through May. Mark commended Lara Beckett for her work on the Visitor Plan and expressed his appreciation for having such a great person to work with. He said that there will be opportunities for public input which includes using the website and contacting him directly. Linda Andes-Georges expressed her desire to attend but was concerned that if three Board members attended the same meeting it would require public announcement. Staff decided to pursue this issue with the City Attorney's Office.

AGENDA ITEM 4 – Matters from the Board

Linda Andes-Georges asked if the change in the Lafayette pipeline alignment would impact the Baseline Reservoir trail agreement. Dave Kuntz explained the construction difficulties that caused them to request abandoning the easement and assured her that it would not change the trail agreement. He added that there seems to be good compliance to the MOU for protecting the wetlands on open space during this construction project.

In response to Linda's offer to compose a letter explaining the reasoning behind the VPAC member choices, Dave told the Board that there have been recent discussions with people associated with some of the user groups. This is an attempt to assure that the groups have a way to get the information they believe is useful to the committee. Staff has also offered to include these representatives on VPAC field trips or be taken separately if appropriate. Dave was encouraged that this effort to communicate seems to be productive.

Sean Kendall reported that he has been attending the IPM Task Force meetings and that eventually they will be making a report to Council. Alice Guthrie, City IPM Coordinator, clarified that the Task Force will come to the Boards in April for public comment on the recommendations and should be ready to take its final proposal to Council in May.

AGENDA ITEM 5 – Open Space and Mountain Parks Integrated Pest Management (IPM) Program review of accomplishments for 2002, and summary of the presentation made to the City of Boulder IPM Task Force.

Jim Reeder introduced this presentation by reminding the Board of what a complex challenge this program faces with the large acreage, the number and variety of non-native plants and the presence of rare and endangered plants and animals. He commended Kathy Damas and Laurie Deiter on the amazing job that they do.

Kathy Damas used a power point presentation to summarize the activities and highlights of the program over the past year. With direction from the Board the IPM program is moving away from an intense operational program and more toward a focus on monitoring and research. Kathy led Board members through the information in the memo, beginning with the spreadsheet summary that is submitted to city council every year. She explained the cultural, mechanical and chemical treatment methods and where and when they were used. Staffs from other work groups as well as Junior Rangers were involved in several of the program activities. Kathy also reported on some of the program highlights such as the IPM Hotline and experimenting with using vinegar, insects and goats as alternative controls.

Laurie Deiter then gave an abbreviated version of the presentation made to the City IPM Task Force in December, 2002. The city departments involved in pest management were asked to provide an overview of their programs, a review of their Best Management Practices (BMP) and the highlights of the most challenging IPM situations the department faces. Laurie explained the four Open Space and Mountain Parks (OSMP) scenarios which were presented to the Task Force. These challenge areas included North Boulder Valley (Mediterranean sage), North Boulder Valley Ranch (Diffuse knapweed), South Boulder Creek Riparian area and the forested foothills of Sanitas.

Linda Andes-Georges commented on the remarkable results of the program especially considering the limited staffing over the past few years. Linda asked why Coal Creek was not chosen as one of the four challenging scenarios. Laurie told her that the areas in the north part of the system had more comparative data, which was important to show, and that she also wanted to include the forest. In response to a question about mapping Laurie told Linda that staff has pulled away from intense mapping goals and is re-evaluating the level of mapping needed for the program. Linda suggested providing photos on the website of (or a link to) the noxious weeds and their native counterparts so that the public will have that information available. Laurie said that the website does contain such information although it may not be updated with the new invasives.

Sean Kendall voiced his concern that there is no written policy regarding the reduction in the use of pesticides as part of the IPM program. The BMPs indicate other options are considered first and the use of chemicals is the last resort but there is really no predetermined limitation on their use. He asked if it would be possible to include the reduction of pesticide use as a departmental goal although, currently, the Board is not giving the department direction on herbicide use. Sean cautioned that budget problems may actually increase reliance on chemicals. Mike Patton agreed that chemical use is determined by individual departments but council has given some direction on moving toward a reduction in overall pesticide use. He added that the Board can give policy direction to create a goal of pesticide reduction for the department.

Alice Guthrie, IPM Coordinator, admitted that at present there is no step-by-step process for the consideration of options, goals, and values to help determine if chemical use is absolutely necessary. This issue will be addressed by the Task Force and brought back to the Board depending on its recommendations. Sean questioned why a limit on the amount of pesticides used cannot be included in the BMPs. Currently the BMPs mandate consideration of alternatives to chemical use first but no reduction is included as part of the directive. He thought that the data presented to the Task Force did not give a complete picture of where and how much pesticide was used throughout the city. Linda Andes-George agreed that she also did not like the idea of using pesticides but thought it was important that some flexibility be allowed in the program. She thought the yearly report provides adequate opportunity to monitor staff's activities.

Mike Patton told Sean that staff does have specific data regarding how much pesticide has been applied to what fields and could present this information in a different manner if the Board thought it would be helpful. Linda Jourgensen agreed that it would be unwise to put an arbitrary number on the amount of pesticides permissible although she was also wary of its use. Mike told the Board that although funding has been cut from the operating budget, more funds have been allocated to the IPM program to focus on the mountain backdrop. Jim Reeder added that the GIS workgroup plays a critical role in developing ways of presenting various data on maps. Laurie agreed that it is a challenge to present the information because of its complexity and she encouraged suggestions that would give them guidance. Sean advised staff not to develop any new maps yet, but to wait until the Task Force report comes out and determine if it would be helpful at that time.

Public Participation

Bruce Bland, 1340 Lehigh, reflected the frustration of the department in making such decisions about weeds and pesticides. He encouraged staff to continue seeking research projects with institutions like CU. He thought it was important to trust staff's expertise and allow them the flexibility to choose the best strategies for dealing with weeds.

MOTION- No action requested.

AGENDA ITEM 6 – Open Space and Mountain Parks Junior Ranger Annual Report

Halice Ruppi began the presentation by acknowledging her working partner, Craig Sommers, who has been integral in the Junior Ranger program. She then reviewed the projects and accomplishments of the 2002 season stressing the value of the program to the department especially in terms of budget constraints. Halice described the curriculum and how the program provides valuable life experiences for the teens involved. The Junior Ranger Program 2002 Year End Report was included as an attachment to the agenda memo.

Linda Jourgensen asked if the budget cuts would affect the program. Halice explained that the reductions in crew members that occurred this past season were the result of safety protocol and they did expect more reductions this year, although it will be less than what occurred last year. Linda Andes-Georges stated her belief that the program provides double value for the community: the city gets the work from the youth and participants get a wonderful educational experience.

Public Participation

Bruce Bland, 1340 Lehigh, agreed that it is a wonderful program and well thought out. He recalled that the report given to parents regarding their child's performance was particularly helpful.

MOTION – No action requested.

AGENDA ITEM 7 – Consideration of Chronic Wasting Disease Monitoring and Management options.

Dean Paschall introduced the presentation by describing the department's goal to develop a management policy that will help staff address the problem of chronic wasting disease (CWD) and provide a way to learn more about the deer population within the OSMP system while working within the budgetary constraints the department is currently facing. He stated that since 1997 only 6 deer within proximity to OSMP land have been identified with the CWD prion but he cautioned that this statistic does not mean there is no problem.

Bryan Pritchett reminded the Board of the presentation given by the Colorado Division of Wildlife (CDOW) last year about CWD and told them since that time staff has been educating itself about the disease including participation in conferences and workshops. OSMP staff has also had several meetings with CDOW staff in an effort to develop strategies for dealing with this problem. Bryan reviewed the four options described in the memo and clarified various details about each. He reported that staff prefers Option A while CDOW prefers Option D. He described Option A as a "status quo plus" strategy and admitted that both Options A and B would increase staff's knowledge of CWD at a slower rate than Option C and are also not considered to be "active" management by the CDOW. Bryan told the Board that Option C would be staff's preferred option if the department's budget would allow it. It would provide staff with the most information about CWD and a mechanism to actively manage CWD on OSMP lands. Acquiring the services of a veterinarian to do the tonsil biopsies is a major stumbling block to this option in addition to the budget restraints. The description of Option C was included in the memo. Dean called the Board's attention to the budget attachment and pointed out that besides the veterinary expenses, Option C would require roughly \$75,000 each year for the 5 year commitment.

Dave Clarkson, CDOW Northeast Region Chronic Wasting Disease Coordinator, told the Board that he appreciated the professionalism of the staff involved in the conversations. He went through the options, again, from the perspective of the CDOW. He described Option A as more of a tracking study than a true management practice. He explained that currently the CDOW is employing a “hotspot management strategy” in several locations along the Front Range. Option D would involve killing 25-30 deer for testing and then, depending on the test results, consulting with OSMF to develop further actions. If a high rate of disease is detected the herd would be further reduced by 20 – 50% and held at that level for several years. This technique is being used by several regional jurisdictions.

In response to a budget question from Sean Kendall, Mike Patton reiterated that Option C was the department’s option of preference but the budget situation and the lack of an available veterinarian were both critical obstacles for this option. If staff finds evidence that the incidence of disease is increasing a different approach will have to be considered and brought back to the Board. Mike recognized that staff is proposing a short term approach but is not ruling out anything at this time. Sean suggested determining the rate of infection by the tonsil testing of 25 or 30 deer instead of killing them and making a determination if further culling is recommended from those numbers. Dave told him testing that many deer would probably not provide adequate information and there was still the problem of finding an available veterinarian to perform the tonsil biopsies. Dean reminded Sean that there is also a start up cost and time needed for training if the department were to make a commitment to live testing. Bryan added that the staff effort to capture the deer (for live testing) which may have to be culled eventually would be stretching CDOW resources unnecessarily. Dave added that the “hot spot” management technique is having positive results in some areas. Bryan assured the Board that if there is a solution to the budget constraints staff would propose a reconsideration of Option C.

Public Participation - None

Return to Board & Staff

MOTION

Linda Jourgensen moved that the OSBT recommend the adoption of Option A above in the memo for 2003. Should information become available to demonstrate that a threshold CWD prevalence greater than 5% has been reached; staff intends to return this matter to the Board for further recommendations. Ken Dunn seconded the motion.

VOTE

The motion passed unanimously.

AGENDA ITEM 8 – Common Ground Committee Presentation

Suzanne Webel, 5735 Prospect Road, Longmont, began the presentation by providing some background information about the group, Our Common Ground, and the purpose for its organization. The group is open to anyone who is interested in improving communication about open space. The goal is to make all area open space programs more successful and more responsive to the people who consider these lands theirs.

Kevin Probst began his power point presentation and indicated that the purpose of the presentation was to tell the Board about the Common Ground forum and to rally interest in participating in a process that will help resolve open space issues. The major conclusions from forum discussions were: there is a need to find common ground, it needs to be an on-going process, government entities need to take the lead in organizing and hosting future forums, the public needs to be involved in organizing and conducting these events and there is a strong public interest in these

issues. The steering committee was formed by interested citizens after the forum. A report of the contributions and comments made at the forum has been compiled and is available online.

Linda Jourgensen commented that the ideas proposed by the group would require some time to think about but suggested that budget restraints, alone, could inhibit departmental involvement. In response to a comment made as part of the presentation, Mike Patton clarified that he and Ron Stewart had verbalized a commitment to the public process in general and not to a specific event. Mike reported that he then described the current staff focus on the Visitor Plan which provides communication opportunities for the public. Larry MacDonnell responded that the recent regional open space forum is also in the domain of what the group is promoting and that the Board does have a strong interest in this kind of thing but added that there was no specific commitment made by OSMP staff to this particular group.

Linda Andes-Georges admired the energy required to put this together. She was wary about the addition of more meetings to attend and the problems of money and staff availability. Linda admitted that there probably is a need for something like this but questioned how often such a gathering should occur and who would pay for it. She suggested something more modest like a once a year event that would allow a free exchange of ideas. Kevin responded that the group anticipated a minimal amount of staff time and money would be required by any of the government entities. He thought the government agencies would assist in spreading the information and gathering the right people to attend the forums. Linda added that this group appeared not to be representative of the community at large. Kevin admitted that, for the population in general, it may not be a hot topic but for that portion of the population that uses open space, it is.

Sean Kendall thanked Kevin and added that he looked forward to reading the report to see what the specific issues were. He stated that the Board represents the community and the Board meetings provide the avenue for public communication. Responding to information Sean anticipated from the report, Kevin reminded him that the forum wasn't designed to discuss specific issues or problems but rather it was a first step in determining how to bring people together to solve the problems. Ken Dunn agreed with Sean that the direction of the group appeared to be basically the same as the charge to the Board members. Kevin admitted that this is not a replacement for Board meetings but he saw the advantage of having longer periods of time for discussion and interchange rather than being limited to a three to five minute discourse. Larry expressed his support of this kind of approach and shared Kevin's frustrations with the limitations of Board meeting structure. He sensed that there was a mixed message regarding how involved government entities would be since this seems to be driven by public initiative. He recommended that the group would need additional representation to make it work. Larry reiterated that staff already does so much to include the community and could not be expected to do more. He suggested that Our Common Ground utilize the report that will be completed by the VPAC as a focus for discussion. This could be a valuable way for the department to take advantage of this invitation. Linda Jourgensen agreed that feedback on the final report from Our Common Ground might have potential and added that the report should be completed by May 30th. She stressed that this was not a commitment to organize such an event because it has not been discussed with staff.

Public Participation – None

Return to Board & Staff

Larry MacDonnell thanked Kevin and Suzanne for the presentation and told him that the Board would continue to interact with the group looking for possible opportunities in the future.

MOTION – No action requested.

ADJOURNMENT – The meeting adjourned at 9:30 p.m.

These draft minutes were prepared by Cecil Fenio.